



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 04-10-2001**

**ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2001**  
**7:30 PM**

**Present:**     **Joani LaMachia, Chair**                   **Suzanne Owayda**  
              **David W. McKenna, Vice-Chair**       **Paul Schlichtman**  
              **Denis J. Sullivan, Secretary**       **Martin J. Thrope**  
              **Barbara C. Goodman**

**Superintendent Kay Donovan, Asst. Supt. Curriculum Joanne Gurry, Director of Special Education Marilyn Bisbicos**

**Call To Order:       7:30**

Newly elected chair, Joani LaMachia called the meeting to order, introduced the two new members, Suzanne Owayda and Paul Schlichtman, and expressed her gratitude to former member Bill Carey for his dedication and years of service.

Ms. LaMachia outlined her goals as chair for the upcoming year which include:

- .. To continue working with the School Committee & School Councils on implementing system wide goals
- .. Engage the community in redistricting the elementary schools
- .. To hire a new principal for Arlington High School

### **Public Participation**

Brackett School parent Jim Gomes addressed the committee relative to concerns surrounding the search for the new Arlington High School principal. Mr. Gomes asked where, when and how often has the position been advertised, who is on the screening committee, what is the time frame for filling the position and how many applications have been received to date. Mr. Gomes stated that he did not want Arlington to settle for second best, but believed it would be more appropriate to name a interim principal if necessary, if the pool of applicants did not meet the screening committee's standards.

Dallin School parent Nora Mann echoed Mr. Gomes concerns and also asked what the process was for information sharing, what the process was for recruitment and what are the criteria for hiring. Ms. Mann stated that when searching for a new superintendent is was a wonderful process for the community and stated that she hopes that the AHS principal search would be the same.

### **Secretary's Report**

Mr. Sullivan reviewed correspondence.

Ms. Goodman requested that the new members have the opportunity to attend an orientation. Ms. Goodman brought to the committees' attention the upcoming Spelling Bee on April 26th and the Cancer Relay on May 5th.

Ms. LaMachia stated that Mr. Thrope would mentor Ms. Owayda and Mr. Schlichtman would work with Mr. Sullivan. Mr. McKenna and Mr. Sullivan volunteered to work on the committee to honor former committee member Bill Carey.

### **Peirce Field Update**

The committee heard a report from Town Counsel John Maher relative to Peirce Field. Mr. Maher explained that the Peirce Field was not part of Monday's Special Town Meeting due to the additional contaminants discovered on the site. Mr. Maher emphasized that we still have an agreement in principal as to the remediation steps with all involved parties. The inner courtyard where the contamination was discovered may not need further remediation because of its depth (10-15 feet). Mr. Maher hopes to have the agreement before Town Meeting sometime in May. Also to be put on hold until this fall is the Town's consideration of the new field house since a number of designs are under review. In response to questions from the Committee, Town Counsel stated that the potential exists to expand the cost of remediation along with the expansion of contamination. Ms. LaMachia asked if Attorney Nancy Kaplan and LPS Jeff Nagle could address the Committee relative to Peirce Field at the next school committee meeting. Mr. Maher offered to update the new committee members on Peirce Field at their convenience.

### **Approval of Job Descriptions**

.. **Arlington High School Principal**

Mr. Martinson, HRO reviewed for the Committee and the audience the search process used to date in hiring a new principal for AHS.

.. Focus groups were held for parents, community, teachers, students, administrators, and school committee members.

- .. Each focus group elected 1-2 members for the screening committee.
- .. The screening committee reviewed candidate's applications, and will narrow the list of applicants to be interviewed.
- .. The interviews will take place by the end of April and will include site visits and interviews with Superintendent Donovan.

Supt. Donovan responded to questions and concerns brought forth by the Committee. Mr. Sullivan took issue with the fact that the AHS principal job description was used by the search committee in screening candidates before the School Committee approved it. Mr. Thrope offered that the Superintendent is responsible for hiring the principal but that any perceived concerns from the community should be addressed. Ms. Owayda stated that she was surprised the process was as far along as it was and agreed with the idea of a interim principal if necessary.

Supt. Donovan stated that the AHS principal's job description had been amended to include input from the focus groups but that the job responsibilities had not changed. The position has been advertised in the Boston Globe, the minority newspapers, on the Massachusetts Exchange Job Description, on the web site, and through the Massachusetts Principal Association. It has also reached out of state candidates.

Mrs. Donovan guaranteed that she would not recommend a candidate that she did not believe to be the very best; and she would not hesitate to have an interim principal if necessary.

Mr. Martinson noted that although the screening process is in progress he would still accept applications to have on file. Mr. McKenna observed that Mr. Martinson is doing the job that the Committee hired him to do, the process is going as planned and that high school principals are hard to come by.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. McKenna it was:

Voted to accept the AHS principal job description with amendments as noted.

(page one, 7d, change the word **dealing** to **developing**, to reword the job goal to

read: **To promote educational excellence and provide a respectful, disciplined, and safe environment for all members of the Arlington High School Community**, (for that statement to be placed under minimum qualifications), to combine under Performance Responsibilities numbers 4 & 21, and to add language that would attract diverse candidates. Unanimous

#### .. **Director-Hardy After School Program**

Mrs. Donovan explained that the warrant article requesting the set up of a revolving account would be to accept program fees for an after school program at the Hardy School. The program would be self-sustaining and we would be able to provide more remedial and homework help for students.

Mr. Thrope voiced concerns over the fact that the position and the program were advertised before being approved by the committee. The Superintendent responded that it is a pilot program; we are recognizing a need and it is an initial step to try it at one school, if it is successful, other schools would be looked at.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. McKenna it was:

Voted to approve the job description of the Director of the Hardy After School Pilot Program. Unanimous.

#### **Request From Town of Hampden**

Supt. Donovan stated that the Town of Hampden sent a letter requesting support for increased funding in category III, school reconstruction projects.

Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was:

Moved that the ASC express its support requested by the Town of Hampden on Category III, school reconstruction projects, and that the Committee write to Senator Antonioni and Representative Larkin expressing our position.

Mr. Schlichtman suggested that the matter be investigated further to find out if money used to support the proposed bill would be taken from existing school construction projects.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. Goodman

Voted to postpone a vote on the request from the Town of Hampden until the next scheduled meeting (April 24, 2001). 6 yes 1 – no (Mr. Thrope-no) Motion passes.

#### **Notification of FY2002 Allocation Grants**

Supt. Donovan notified the Committee and asked approval for the FY2002 Entitlement and Allocation Grants, Federal & State Programs.

On a motion by Mr. McKenna and seconded by Mr. Sullivan:

Voted to accept the FY2002 Allocation of Grants as presented by Supt. Donovan. Unanimous.

#### **Town Meeting Warrant Article #84**

Supt. Donovan suggested that in light of the new members of the committee that a vote of "no action" is taken up at this time with the understanding that the Committee could address the issue at a future time.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was:

Voted 'No Action' on Warrant Article #84. 6 yes 1 no (Ms. Goodman-voted no). Motion passes.

#### **Subcommittee Requests**

Ms. LaMachia asked members to identify their interest and submit the requests before the next meeting. Mr. McKenna questioned the need for the maintenance and operations subcommittee, it has not met in the past year and he suggested that if there is not a need that it be discontinued.

#### **Request for Field Trip**

Mrs. Donovan stated that per request of the Committee, the Ottoson Middle School is seeking permission for the 6th grade field trip to Canobie Lake in New Hampshire.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was:  
Voted to approve the Ottoson Middle School field trip to Canobie Lake, New Hampshire. Unanimous

**Metco Bus Report**

Supt. Donovan reported that five secondary students were passengers on the Metco bus when the bus skidded on the ice recently; no one was seriously hurt.

**Student Government Day**

Mrs. Donovan invited members to participate in Student Government Day, scheduled for May 3rd. However, she is unable to attend since she will be away at that time.

**MCAS/Reading & Long Composition**

Dr. Gurry reported that the long composition tests will begin on April 11th with the make up in May. Mrs. Donovan informed the committee that some of the tests have not been received but that there is a tracer on them.

**Public Vote On Pay Increases**

Mrs. Donovan informed the Committee that a public vote must be taken on the pay increases voted at the last meeting in executive session.

On a motion by Mr. McKenna and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was:

Voted to give a pay increase of 3 percent (3%) to non-professional staff (teacher assistants & permanent substitutes) who have not received an increase in the past two years effective April 1, 2001. RC: Unanimous

**New Business**

- .. The Ottoson Spring Concert will be held on April 11th
- .. The Interfaith Breakfast is scheduled for Monday, April 16th @ 7:30 AM.
- .. The Thompson School was chosen as a Vanguard School by the DOE, one of ten in the Commonwealth.
- .. Alan Tosti, Chairman of the Finance Committee will speak at the next school committee meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was  
Voted to enter executive session for a legal issue with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session. RC: Unanimous

**Executive Session 10:15-10:40 PM**

On a motion made and seconded it was unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:40 PM

Respectfully submitted

Karen Tassone  
Committee Secretary